DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 037 SO 013 107

AUTHOR Kolar, Walter W.
TITLE Bulgarians: Heroes.
INSTITUTION Duquesne Univ., Pittsburgh, Pa. Tamburitzans Inst. of Folk Arts.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Ethnic Heritage Studies Branch.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 27p.: For a listing of related documents, see SO 013 103. Photographs throughout document may not reproduce clearly from EDRS in microfiche.
AVAILABLE FROM Duquesne University, Tamburitzans Institute of Folk Arts, 1801 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 ($3.00).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Background; Elementary Secondary Education; *Epics; *Ethnic Studies; *Folk Culture; *Legends; Medieval Literature; Poetry; Social Studies; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS *Bulgaria; Ethnic Heritage Studies Program

ABSTRACT

The escapades and contributions of eight outstanding heroes and legendary heroic figures in Bulgarian history are introduced in this booklet. The document is part of an ethnic heritage teaching unit intended for use by elementary and secondary social studies classroom teachers as they develop and implement cultural awareness programs on Bulgaria. Heroes discussed are Cyril and Methodius (inventors of the Cyrillic alphabet in the ninth century); Father Paissi (publisher of the first history of Bulgaria in 1762); Haiduks (a Robin Hood-like band of brigands); Ivan Vazov (popular writer of the 1850's who supported Bulgarian liberation from the Turks); Hristo Botev (19th century freedom fighter, known as Bulgaria's Paul Revere); Krali Marko (chief legendary hero in Bulgarian folk music, champion of the oppressed); and Hitar Petar (legendary peasant folk hero dedicated to social equality and individual rights). With the exception of Cyril and Methodius, all these heroes were involved in some way in freeing Bulgarians from the 500 year Turkish domination (1400-1900). For each hero and/or legendary figure, information is presented on personal background, heroic qualities, contemporary events, major contributions, and folklore tales, songs, and poems, based on heroic exploits. (DB)

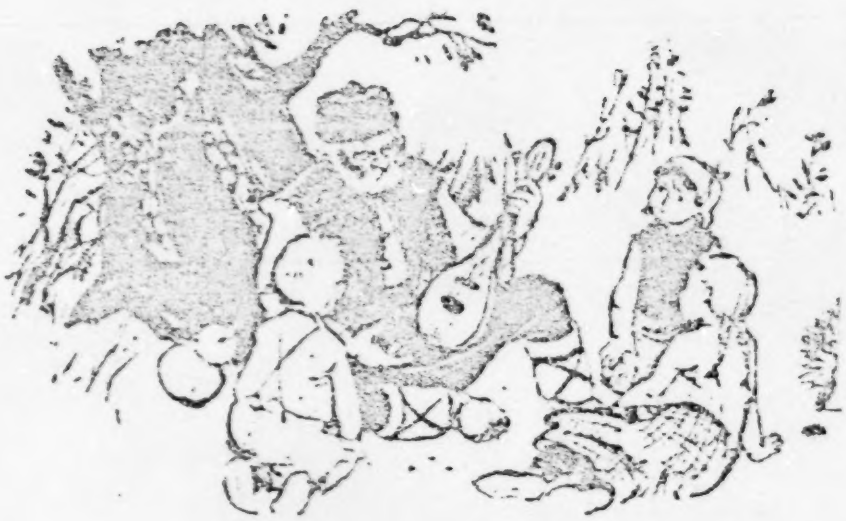
****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED198037

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Walter W. Kolar
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



SO 013 107

BULGARIANS
HEROES

Selected and Written by
WALTER W. KOLAR

Published by

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY TAMBURITZANS
INSTITUTE OF FOLK ARTS

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1979

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

KIRIL and METODI 6

FATHER PAISSI 8

HAIDUKS 10

IVAN VAZOV 12

HRISTO BOTEV 16

KRALI MARKO 20

HITAR PETAR 23

INTRODUCTION

This little booklet makes a very light attempt to speak of some of the heroes that exist in Bulgarian history. By no means are all such heroes mentioned. Many, many very popular and deserving heroes are left out, not because they are not important but rather, because of lack of space. Thus, only a very few heroes are mentioned, and these are not necessarily the most important.

Certainly such names as King Boris, Vasil Levski, Lyuben Karavelov, Georgi Dimitrov, Todor Zhivkov and others should be considered as some of the great heroes of Bulgarian history. Like most other countries, Bulgaria has hundreds of heroes, large and small. If you had to name the three greatest American heroes, who would you name? George Washington? Abraham Lincoln? Daniel Boone? Lewis and Clark?

Most of the heroes listed in this booklet were involved, in one way or another, with freeing the Bulgarians and their country from the Turks who occupied their country from the 14th century to the 19th century. Some were fighters, some were writers, some were legendary and folk heroes and two created the Bulgarian alphabet. Each one of them is very well known to every Bulgarian. Each one of them deserves to be listed among the "heroes."

KIRIL and METODI
(CYRIL and METHODIUS)

In the middle of the 9th century there lived in the town of Salonika (in present day Greece) two Slav brothers, Cyril and Methodius. They were priests and missionaries who were given the task of preaching Christianity to many of the peoples of Europe. This was at the time when all of Europe was being influenced by Latinization and the Byzantines, when the Arabs with Islam and the Arab language appeared on the shores. This was an age when God's word was preached only in Latin, Hebrew and ancient Greek.

The two missionary priests found they could not easily preach to the Slavs, to the shepherd and the worker in the field because these people didn't understand any language but their own. So, Cyril and Methodius translated the main texts of the liturgy into the Slavonic dialect spoken in Macedonia. Cyril had earlier devised a special script, derived from the Greek alphabet. He called this "glagolitic" which meant loosely, to spread the word of God.

Armed with this Slavonic language and writing, the two missionaries set out to preach the word of God to the Slavs. Even the King of Moravia called them to preach to his people in the Slavonic tongue. Cyril was probably one of the first people in the world to realize the idea of ethnic diversity. He helped peoples to speak and write their own languages, which was a departure from the Latin language of the Vatican in Rome. Cyril finally died while visiting the Vatican and was laid to rest in the eternal city in 869.

Today, much of the European world, with its extensions into other continents, still remains divided into two alphabetical groups: Latin and Cyrillic, the alphabet which took its name from Cyril, the priest.

Cyrillic is spoken and used today in Bulgaria, Soviet Union and Serbia and serves a great number of peoples in Europe and Asia.

FATHER PAISSI

Beginning in the 15th century, the Bulgarian lands and people fell under the domination of foreign powers, particularly the Turkish Empire. This foreign rule dominated Bulgarians for almost 500 years.

One of the first to awaken the spirit of freedom was brought about by a monk in the monastery of Mt. Athos, who, in 1762 published a history of the old Bulgarian kingdom. Father Paissi's book marks the beginning of a literary revival in Bulgaria that ended about 100 years later in the liberation of the country.

He was born at Samokov in 1720 and educated in the monasteries at Hilander and Mount Athos. In the preface of his book Father Paissi writes that he had been frequently insulted by assertions of neighboring countries that the Bulgarians had no national history and that his country had never produced any political or spiritual leaders of importance. In the same preface, he told the Bulgarian people to be proud of who they were and never be ashamed to be a Bulgarian but tell the whole world how proud they were. Father Paissi travelled widely in Bulgaria, Austria, and Russia and searched carefully all the historical documents he could find. Then he wrote his "History of the Bulgarian People with Accounts of their Tsars and Saints" in a simple and graphic style. This was the spark that roused the sleeping partiotism of the Bulgarians.

Many Bulgarian immigrants in America still remember with pride the words of Father Paissi. One group of Bulgarian immigrants in Homestead, Pennsylvania built a home for their Bulgarian and Macedonian Beneficial Association and to this day it is called the Otets Paissi Dom (the Father Paissi Home).

8

HAIDUKS

Haiduks are sort of "noble brigands" of the Robin Hood type who took it upon themselves to take from one (usually the rich and the enemy) to give to another (usually the poor Bulgarian countryman).

Haiduks gathered in bands led by a voyvoda (leader) and were active in the summer months when the forests were covered with leaves and during the remaining months they hid in the villages. These haiduk bands laid ambush to enemies on roads and passes. They terrified both the Turkish oppressors and the Bulgarian supporters of their rule. When caught, the haiduk was severely punished, but the people hid and protected them and created for them some of their finest songs.

The themes of their songs cover many aspects of the life of a haiduk from the moment of departure into the mountains until their heroic death. Here's a classical example of the ideal outward appearance of the haiduk from the song of Kara Tanas:

> It was Kara Tanas that led them
> Ivantcho bore the standard.
> With long rifles on the shoulder
> With a jataghan in the belt,
> With cartridge boxes of fine gold
> And pairs of many colored pistols. . .

There were women haiduks. The forest and mountain were considered friends and protectors who grieved for the haiduks:

The forest has begun to weep
The forest and also the mountain
Both the leaves of the forest
And the birds in the trees
For Indje voyvoda:
Where is Indje to come
To cheer up the forest,
The forest and the mountain!

Some stories deal with the moment of parting of a haiduk and his mother:

He kissed his mother's hand,
His mother kissed his face.
Then he went out of the door,
He went out, not to come in again.

One strong theme was the attempt of the haiduks to liberate their country from the almost 500 year long rule of the Turks:

- Dontcho, you of Bulgarian descent,
take up your sword,
shoulder your gun,
and go up into the green forest,
summon the lads, the heroes,
and fight the cursed chitaks (Turkish soldiers)
so to take back our land
so to ransom our children
so to free our wives
to commemorate our fathers
to avenge our mothers!

IVAN VAZOV

One of the most popular of Bulgarian writers is Ivan Vazov who was born in the small town of Sopot on June 27, 1850. Vazov is considered by many to be Bulgaria's national poet.

Bulgaria, at this time, was still under 500 years yoke of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. But this was also the time when the spirit of Bulgaria was beginning to stir and thoughts of freedom were in the air.

Ivan Vazov came from a rich family and his father was a well-to-do merchant. Vazov, of course, was expected to follow in his father's footsteps, but he liked reading books and writing poetry more.

In September 1875, in the town of Sopot, he joined the fight for freedom and, placing his hand on the Bible and a dagger swore loyalty to the cause: "Freedom or Death!" In much the same manner about loo years earlier, an American patriot named Patrick Henry was saying "Give me Liberty, or give me Death!"

Ivan Vazov lived to see Bulgaria's liberation from the Turks. He also lived through other wars in which his country was involved. He died in September 22, 1921 at the age of 71.

All throughout his life he wrote about Bulgaria and its people - he loved both with a passion. Many of his poems have merged with the folk culture of Bulgaria and are known by heart to the very young long before they can read.

One sample of his writing is his poem "Where is Bulgaria?"

12

WHERE IS BULGARIA?

If men ask me where the sunrise
Warmed me first when I was small,
If men ask me where the land is
That I cherish most of all,

This will be my simple answer:
Where the mighty Danube flows,
Where the Black Sea brightly dances
In the east and stormy grows;

Where the Balkan raises nobly
To the sky its mountain chain,
Where the broad Maritsa slowly
Wanders through the Thracian plain;

Where the turbid river Vardar
Through green fields and meadows roars,
Where Mount Rila's summit sparkles,
Where lake waves lap Ohrid's shores;

Where the people suffer anguish
And in bondage pine today,
Who in one and the same language
Voice their sorrow, weep and pray.

I was born there! There my forebears
Now repose in holy ground,
There in times of peace and warfare
Did there thunderous fame resound.

And the country they ruled over
Touched Carpathia's rocky heights,

Even made Constantinople's
Ramparts quake before its might.

See the ruins of Preslava
And of Turnovo the Great;
And past glory of our fathers
These sad monuments relate!

Dear Bulgaria, land I cherish,
Land that brims with kindliness,
Land where I from birth was nourished,
My obeisance accept!

I revere and love your mountains,
Rivers, forests, azure sky
And your merry-making meadows
Where God's blessings multiply,

And your suffering and sorrow,
Glorious antiquity,
Past rememberance, splendid morrow
Rid of all iniquity.

It's to you that all my thoughts and
All my feelings ever fly.
I was born in your bosom and
There in freedom wish to die!

HRISTO BOTEV

He was the Paul Revere of Bulgaria. He aroused his people. He rang alarm bells. He called timid men to join the crusade for liberty!

He was Hristo Botev!

Hristo Botev was born in the little town of Kalofer in 1848. He only lived for 28 years, but during those 28 years he lit a light in Bulgaria that has not gone out to this very day. He died in 1876.

Botev died in 1876 fighting against the Turks. He was a voyvoda (leader) of a band of about 300 men who fought a battle at a little known place called Vratza. He died fighting for the freedom of his country.

Hristo Botev was a poet, with barely 20 poems to show, but everyone is a gem. It was through his political genius that he left such a strong mark not only upon his fellow countrymen, but upon the entire world. He took the concept of freedom and made it apply to the whole world, not only to his conquered country of Bulgaria. He wrote about life, and the jurisdiction of human life as a whole. He was a master in the world of poetry. In form, Botev's poetry was in the folk tradition and was often like a song which flows, easy and relaxed.

To Botev, words and deeds were not to be separated. He wrote about sacrifice and then went out and sacrificed his own life. He wrote about other revolutionary leaders. In fact, his best known poem is about Hadji Dimiter, just such a leader who had been slain not long before the death of Botev.

THE DEATH OF HADJI DIMITER

He's alive, he's alive still! There in the mountains,
Soaked in his blood he lies there gasping,
A warrior with a deep wound in his breast,
A warrior, young and in manhood's strength.

To one side he has thrown his rifle,
To the other his sabre, snapped in two.
His eyes are darkening, his head rolls blindly,
With lips that curse the whole universe.

There lies the warrior, and from the sky,
Halted the sun beats angrily down.
In the plains somewhere a harvester's singing,
And stronger than ever the blood flows on.

Now is the harvest. Sing on, you slave girls,
Those songs of sorrow! Burn on, you sun, too,
On this land of slaves. Yet one more hero
Is now to perish - but hush, my heart. . .

He does not die who falls in battle,
Fighting for freedom. Everything mourns him,
Both earth and heaven, wild beast and nature,
And of him minstrels sing their songs.

Evening draws down, and the moon rises,
Stars bespangle the vault of the sky;
The forest rustles, a wind awakens,
The mountain is singing a haidouk song.

And woodland fairies, all clothed in white,
Lovely, wonderful, take up tune.
Across the green grass softly stepping,
They came to the warrior, and there they
kneel down.

One of them sprinkles his face with water,
Another bounds his wounds with fresh herbs;
The third bends down and kisses him swiftly,
And he looks up at her, smiling and kind.

"Tell me, my sister, where's Karadja?
Where is my trusty warrior band?
Tell me, and take my soul from my body,
Sister, I'm longing for my death now."

And they clap their hands, and clasp each other,
And with songs they flit up into the skies,
Flying and singing till dawn overtakes them,
Seeking the soul of Karadja.

KRALI MARKO

The chief legendary hero in Bulgarian folk-song is Krali Marko (King Mark), a champion of the oppressed, an adventurer to whom nature gave great powers both intellectual and physical. He was a national god created by the people in their own image. His castle was supposed to be somewhere near Prilep but his activities were almost always surrounded by mystery. He was always accompanied in his adventures by his faithful horse Sharko, "blue-grey with dark spots." He is usually represented in songs as the champion of the oppressed Christians against the Turks. The following is a song which tells of the death of Krali Marko:

"There in the castle at the lofty battlement,
With his friend of friends sat the king's son Marko,
With his friend of friends, Phillip the Hungarian,
And the wife of Marko, the fair young wife attended them,
Filling their cups with the noble wine.
Then it was they gazed o'er the plain of Prilep,
And unto Marko spoke Philip the Hungarian:
'Knowest thou what has befallen in the world?
Never dost thou sally forth beyond the threshold,
As if the world had nought save the beauty of thy wife.
And what befalls, of that thou knowest nothing.
There is invented a death machine
And inside it there is a little ball,
Out it flies and strikes a man, and out flies his soul.'
Then laughed Marko at the word of Philip,
Marko laughed and his wife was smiling,
And these were the words of the great-hearted hero:

'Widely forsooth, my friend, hast thou
traveled,
To well thou knowest what happens in the world,
Yet have I fears for thy understanding.
How can a ball kill a noble hero?
Philip the Hungarian raised his voice and shouted,
Shouted with his voice o're the Prilep's plain:
'Shepherd, come hither, leave the sheep a grazing,
Young shepherd, come hither with your little gun.'
Then Marko laughed until the castle quivered:
'Now we shall see, now we shall be instructed.'
When the shepherd came, Marko seized his gun,
Throwing it about as if it were a feather.
'And that you say can send a hero into darkness?
Take your foolish gun, there is my hand for you.
Let the ball fly forth and I will catch it.'
The ball flew forth and bored through Marko's hand.
Then he grew pale, the old great-hearted hero,
Sitting there in silence with his arms upon the
table,
And at nightfall he went forth but returned no more.

"There is a story told by the people
That Marko hides between the lofty mountains,
Near the chasm of Demir-Kapia,
Where the river Vardar winds like a serpent.
There in a cave he lies hidden,
There the hero slumbers through the ages.
In the earth before it he has plunged his lance
And against the lance his horse is fastened
Ever ready for the gallant Marko
When he rides again in pursuit of exploits.
Beyond the chasm winds a mountain path.
When the people go there they turn round and
shout:

'Do you live, do you still live, father Marko?'
And it is to them as though they heard this answer:
'He lives, he still lives, the people's father Marko.'"

HITAR PETAR
(CLEVER PETER)

One of Bulgaria's best known folk heroes is Hitar Petar. Loosely translated this can mean Clever Peter, Sly Peter, Wise Peter, etc.

Hitar Petar is an ordinary type peasant with no particular status in the community. He is poor and wears old worn and torn clothes. He is so well known all over the country that any village can be his village. Everybody claims him even though he has no special status. He is always riding a tired old donkey named Marko.

Hitar Petar is sometimes cast in the role of the clever and sometimes in the role of a fool. He plays pranks on everybody - nobody is exempt.

There is one idea that Hitar Petar never forgets, and that is his emphasis on social equality, on individual rights. He is forever the champion of the peasant poor. He is almost always on the side of the poor, the peasant, the underdog and against the government leaders and businessmen. He always manages to outsmart those who would take advantage of him, those who ridicule him, and those who try to get the best of him in any situation.

That Hitar Petar is held in such high esteem points to the great love the Bulgarian people have for humor and satire. The Bulgarians even have International Festivals devoted to Humor and Satire in the city of Gabrovo.

There are other such folk heroes in countries that

are neighbors to Bulgaria. Whenever Hitar Petar is confronted by one of them he is always shown to be smarter and more clever. There is a folk hero of the Near East who was known in Bulgaria as Nastradin Hodzha, and there is a story where these two folk heroes met. It goes like this:

Hitar Petar and Nastradin Hodzha once met in a village. Nastradin Hodzha said to Hitar Petar, who was leaning up against the wall, "Tell me, if you can, a very big lie." "I can't" said Hitar Petar, "I left my bag of lies at home. However, if you will lean against this wall and support it, I'll go home and get my bag."

So Nastradin Hodzha takes his place and leans against the wall to support it. After quite a long time passes Hitar Petar does not return. A passing peasant is called by Nastradin Hodzha and is requested to go find Hitar Petar and tell him to hurry up because he's getting tired of holding up the wall.

The peasant laughs long and hard and asks "Are you looking for a bigger lie than this one?"

Then there's the story of the time when the son of a rich man slapped Hitar Petar. Hitar Petar then went to the Turkish judge to complain. The judge did not want to charge the son because he and the rich man were friends. So the judge told Hitar Petar to find his own solution to the problem.

Hitar Petar then promptly slaps the face of the judge and tells him that that is his solution and that the judge could now pass the solution on to the son.

24

А Б В Г Д Е

Ж З И Й К

Л М Н О П Р

С Т У Ф Х Ц

Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ь

Ю Я

BULGARIA
ROMANIA
NORTH WEST
BULGARIA
NORTH BULGARIA
DOBRUDZHA
BLACK SEA
Balkan Mountains
YUGOSLAVIA
SHOPE
WESTERN
THRACE
EASTERN
THRACE
STRANDZHA
PIRIN
RHODOPES
TURKEY
GREECE
България